

Great Picture Books for Teen Living

Just The Way You Are by Marcus Pfister

Have students list five things they like about themselves and then five things they don't. Discussion about this could include that for most of us it is easier to find things about ourselves that we don't like. If there are things about our selves we can't change then we need to make the best of them.

A Bad Case of Stripes by David Shannon

A great discussion can be had about trying to change ourselves to be like others and the dangers of doing this.

How Full is Your Bucket? by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer

Students can list ways that their own buckets have been emptied. They can discuss how this feels and then talk about things they can do or say at school or in their own families to help fill other's buckets. Once students learn that the process of filling someone's bucket helps them fill their own they can begin to experience the power of this concept. I had students take scrapbook paper and write their name on it and then we passed these around so that all the students could write a positive comment on each student's paper.

Mars Needs Moms by Berkeley Breathed

Students can work on a type of want ad entitled 9th Graders Need Moms. They could work on their own and then pair up to come up with the best ideas for their want ads and then have each pair choose their best one and do a group want ad on the board. This activity can help students find more to appreciate about their parents.

Fanny's Dream by Caralyn and Mark Buehner

This is a great book to help students think about what is really important in a marriage or relationship. You can have students make a list or write a paragraph about their ideal person. Then after they hear the story have them look at their lists again and see if there are things they would change. Ask if hearing the story made them think differently about what is really important in relationships. This can encourage some great discussion on important character traits that are good to look for and also have in oneself.

Another fun activity with this book is to have students choose a character in the story and have them write a postcard to another character in the story. (Example Heber writes to the fairy godmother)

Enemy Pie by Derek Munson

A fun way to use this book is to begin with a discussion on what you could put in a pie that you were going to give to your worst enemy. Then read the book and discuss or have a write around with ideas from the story and how sometimes we just need to get to know people.